



## Raptors in New Jersey

Raptors, more commonly referred to as "birds of prey," include hawks, owls, eagles, falcons and vultures. Raptors have fascinated people for thousands of years and inspire people even today. Fortunately, after some frightening declines in some of our largest species, raptors represent some of New Jersey's greatest success stories.

The bald eagle, osprey and peregrine falcon have made impressive comebacks from the brink of extinction, in large part thanks to the efforts of division biologists. Unfortunately, not all species of raptors are thriving - the American kestrel, for instance, has experienced a sharp decline in recent years, and the work of biologists in the Endangered and Nongame Species Program continues.

The links below lead to pages with information about some of these magnificent birds.

- ▶ Bald Eagle
- ▶ Peregrine Falcon
- ▶ Osprey
- ▶ American Kestrel

### Bald Eagle Information

The bald eagle is a shining example of recovery in New Jersey. In 1973, when the Endangered and Nongame Species Conservation Act was passed, there was just one nesting pair, in a remote forest in Cumberland County.

Today there are nearly 50 nesting pairs of eagles in the state. Most are in the Delaware Bay counties of Cumberland and Salem, but eagles can be found nearly statewide. Additionally, numbers of wintering eagles along the Delaware have increased dramatically. They remain on the endangered list (threatened federally), however, due to their sensitivity to environmental contaminants, habitat loss and human disturbance. The challenge to biologists and citizens now is protecting the lands and waterways used by eagles to maintain and enhance this species' recovery.

#### January 2003 Species of the Month

Bald Eagle Fact Sheet (pdf, 51kb)

2004 Eagle Report (pdf, 138kb)

2003 Eagle Report (pdf, 132kb)

2002 Report (pdf, 380kb)

2002 Eagle Update

2001 Report (pdf, 120kb)

1998 Report

### Peregrine Falcon Information

302789



Peregrine falcons, as the fastest bird in the skies, have fascinated people for centuries. Peregrine numbers fell due to the effects of DDT which caused their eggs to fail, and they became extinct east of the Mississippi by 1964. They were one of the first birds to be the focus of conservation, however, and through an intensive reintroduction program, returned to the skies in New Jersey and other eastern states in the 1980s.



The population in New Jersey has been about 15-17 pairs annually since 1998. In 2003, on the 30th anniversary of New Jersey's Endangered and Nongame Species Conservation Act, peregrine falcons returned to their historic cliff nesting habitat on the Hudson River Palisades – a huge milestone in the peregrine's recovery in the state and the region.

#### Peregrine Facts

Peregrine Falcon Webcam

Peregrine Falcon Chick Feeding Video

The Jersey City Peregrine Project and Curriculum

### **Osprey Information**

Ospreys are well-loved birds of our coastal bays and marshes. Formerly known as the fish hawk, ospreys rely almost exclusively on fish for their diet. They have taken well to human structures, such as duck blinds and channel markers, for nest structures. They, like eagles and falcons, succumbed to the effects of DDT and their population dropped to about 60 pairs by the early 1970s.

With the help of biologists and, more recently, volunteers who put up nest structures, they have recovered to more than 360 nesting pairs. The Endangered and Nongame Species Program monitors their health as an indicator of many coastal species, as they are sensitive to contaminants and the viability of the aquatic food chain.

Osprey - April 2003 Species of the Month

2003 Osprey Report

2002 Osprey Report

Osprey Nest Structure Placement Information

### **American Kestrel Information**

This once-common inhabitant of fallow fields and pastures has declined in recent years, and the reasons are largely unknown. The Endangered and Nongame Species Program embarked on a survey campaign in 2004, and the findings were alarming. More detailed surveys and habitat evaluations will be done in 2005.

Please report your sightings of this bird, especially in the breeding season (April – July) using the Sighting Report Form.

### **ADDITIONAL LINKS**

- ▶ **New Jersey's Endangered and Threatened Species**
- ▶ **Checklist of NJ Birds**
- ▶ **Watchable Wildlife and Diversity Tours**
- ▶ **Partners in Flight**
- ▶ **Wildcat Ridge Hawkwatch**

[back to Endangered and Nongame Species Program page](#)  
[back to top](#)

✱ Some files on this site require adobe acrobat pdf reader to view. [download the free pdf reader](#)

[contact dep](#) | [privacy notice](#) | [legal statement](#) | [accessibility statement](#)



division of fish & wildlife: [home](#) | [links](#) | [contact f&w](#)

department: [njdep home](#) | [about dep](#) | [index by topic](#) | [programs/units](#) | [dep online](#)

statewide: [njhome](#) | [citizen](#) | [business](#) | [government](#) | [services A to Z](#) | [departments](#) | [search](#)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2005